

1943. Entered service at: Tulsa, Okla. Birth: Broken Arrow, Okla. G.O. No.: 30, 8 April 1944.

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action on 22 September 1943, at Oliveto, Italy. Although 2d Lt. Childers previously had just suffered a fractured instep he, with 8 enlisted men, advanced up a hill toward enemy machinegun nests. The group advanced to a rock wall overlooking a cornfield and 2d Lt. Childers ordered a base of fire laid across the field so that he could advance. When he was fired upon by 2 enemy snipers from a nearby house he killed both of them. He moved behind the machinegun nests and killed all occupants of the nearer one. He continued toward the second one and threw rocks into it. When the 2 occupants of the nest raised up, he shot 1. The other was killed by 1 of the 8 enlisted men. 2d Lt. Childers continued his advance toward a house farther up the hill, and single-handed, captured an enemy mortar observer. The exceptional leadership, initiative, calmness under fire, and conspicuous gallantry displayed by 2d Lt. Childers were an inspiration to his men.

Mr. Speaker, Ernest Childers continued to serve his Nation after the war. He taught jungle training in Panama, and winter training in Alaska before retiring in 1965 as a Lieutenant Colonel. A brief stint with the Job Corps program in Washington ended after he suffered a heart attack. Upon returning to Oklahoma, he spoke with students about the emotional cost of war.

Most recently, Lieutenant Colonel Childers wrote an inspirational message to the Nation against racism to discourage attacks against Arab Americans after our Nation was attacked on September 11, 2001. Childers wrote, "Even though, as a Native American, I have darker skin than some Americans, that doesn't mean I'm any less patriotic. Even during those times in our history when Native Americans were persecuted and discriminated against, we still volunteered for military service."

He said, "Remember, Native Americans didn't even receive the vote until World War I, yet we served in military action because, when all is said and done, we are loyal and patriotic Americans."

Ernest Childers died on March 17, 2005. His legacy of valor and courage for future generations of American lives on and it is supremely appropriate that we recognize his legacy by naming this VA facility after him.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I wish to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. SULLIVAN), who sponsored this bill.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of my bill, H.R. 366, which will designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic to honor one of our Nation's finest military heroes.

Ernest Childers holds the distinction of being the first Native American to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic action in 1943 at the battle of Oliveto, Italy, where he charged the German machine gun nest against machine gun fire. Although suffering a broken foot in the assault, Childers ordered covering fire and advanced up the hill, single-handedly killing two snipers, silencing two machine gun nests, and capturing an enemy mortar observer. His courageous action helped American troops win the battle and saved the lives of American soldiers. Childers was also awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star for his actions.

Born in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, Childers enlisted in the Oklahoma National Guard in 1937 to earn extra money while attending the Chilocco Indian School in north central Oklahoma. While stationed at Fort Sill in Oklahoma, he was deployed to Africa to fight in World War II.

Childers retired from the Army in 1965 as a Lieutenant Colonel, but remained very active in the Tulsa community, serving Indian youth which led to the naming of the middle school in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma in his honor.

As a proud Creek Indian, in 1966, Childers was honored by the Tulsa Chapter of the Council of American Indians as "Oklahoma's Most Outstanding Indian."

Of his military service in World War II, Childers once said, "This American Indian has only one country to defend, and when you're picked on, the American Indian never turns his back." A fitting quote from a man who exemplified courage under fire and dedication to defending our Nation.

Until his death on March 17, 2005, Childers was one of Oklahoma's last Congressional Medal of Honor recipients still living in the State.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation to honor his life and legacy. We were honored to have him grace us with his model character, defend us with his bravery, and leave us all a life well lived.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional Members who have requested time, but I just would encourage a positive vote on this bill for, obviously, someone who loved our country very, very much, and would encourage Members to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 366.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 366.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 366.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CHARLES GEORGE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2546) to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina, as the "Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2546

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DESIGNATION OF CHARLES GEORGE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center located at 1100 Tunnel Road, Asheville, North Carolina, shall after the date of the enactment of this Act be known and designated as the "Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in any law, regulation, map, document, record, or other paper of the United States to the medical center referred to in subsection (a) shall be considered to be a reference to the Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In its history, the Medal of Honor has been awarded only 3,463 times. 3,458 of those were awarded for separate acts of heroism. I'm here today to tell you about one such act and the extraordinary individual who performed it. I am truly in awe of his courage and selflessness.

His name was Charles George. He was a Private First Class in the United States Army. PFC George distinguished himself by going above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy on the night of November 30, 1952.

He was a member of a raiding party committed to engage the enemy and capture a prisoner for interrogation. Subject to intense mortar and machine gun fire, and suffering several casualties throughout the advance, he fought

valiantly, and upon reaching the crest of the hill, leaped into the trenches and engaged with the enemy in hand-to-hand combat.

When friendly troops were ordered to move back upon completion of the assignment, he and two comrades remained to cover the withdrawal. While in the process of leaving the trenches, a hostile soldier hurled a grenade into their midst.

PFC George shouted a warning to one comrade, pushed the other soldier out of danger, and with full knowledge of the consequences, unhesitatingly threw himself upon the grenade, absorbing the full blast of the explosion. Although seriously wounded in this display of valor, he refrained from any outcry which would divulge the position of his companions.

The two soldiers evacuated him to the forward aid station and shortly thereafter he succumbed to his wounds.

This brave young man epitomized courage and self sacrifice. To show our deep appreciation, and so that we never forget, H.R. 2546 would name the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina, as the Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

□ 1630

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2546, which would rename the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina, the Charles George Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

This legislation was introduced by my colleague from North Carolina, Representative HEATH SHULER, and I appreciate his efforts to bring this bill to the floor for consideration so that we can pay tribute to yet another Medal of Honor recipient.

This legislation honors a soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice for his comrades in arms and for his country. As a grateful Nation, it is fitting and right to offer tribute to him by giving his name to a facility that expresses our Nation's promise to those who served us in military uniform.

Private First Class Charles George was a native of Cherokee, North Carolina, and a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation. He served his country bravely in the U.S. Army and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on the night of November 30, 1952.

On that night in Korea, Private First Class George was a member of a raiding party committed to engage the enemy and capture a prisoner for interrogation. During the execution of its mission, the group was subjected to intense enemy fire and suffered several casualties. PFC George fought valiantly and, upon reaching the crest of the hill, leapt into the trenches and

closed with the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. When friendly troops were ordered to pull back upon completion of the mission, he and two comrades provided cover for the withdrawal of troops. While they were leaving the trenches, a grenade was hurled into their midst. PFC George shouted a warning to his comrades, pushed one soldier out of the way, and threw himself on the grenade. Even though severely injured and certainly in agony, PFC George remained quiet so that his comrades' position would not be disclosed. His companions evacuated him to the first aid station, where he shortly succumbed to his wounds.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I will submit the text of Private First Class George's Medal of Honor citation for the RECORD.

*GEORGE, CHARLES

Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army, Company C, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division. Place and date: Near Songnae-dong, Korea, 30 November 1952. Entered service at: Whittier, N.C. Born: 23 August 1932, Cherokee, N.C. G.O. NO.: 19, 18 March 1954. Citation: PFC George, a member of Company C, distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and outstanding courage above and beyond the call of duty in action against the enemy on the night of 30 November 1952. He was a member of a raiding party committed to engage the enemy and capture a prisoner for interrogation. Forging up the rugged slope of the key terrain feature, the group was subjected to intense mortar and machine gun fire and suffered several casualties. Throughout the advance, he fought valiantly and, upon reaching the crest of the hill, leaped into the trenches and closed with the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. When friendly troops were ordered to move back upon completion of the assignment, he and 2 comrades remained to cover the withdrawal. While in the process of leaving the trenches a hostile soldier hurled a grenade into their midst. PFC George shouted a warning to 1 comrade, pushed the other soldier out of danger, and, with full knowledge of the consequences, unhesitatingly threw himself upon the grenade, absorbing the full blast of the explosion. Although seriously wounded in this display of valor, he refrained from any outcry which would divulge the position of his companions. The 2 soldiers evacuated him to the forward aid station and shortly thereafter he succumbed to his wound. PFC George's indomitable courage, consummate devotion to duty, and willing self-sacrifice reflect the highest credit upon himself and uphold the finest traditions of the military service.

Mr. Speaker, Private First Class Charles George's incomparable heroism exemplifies the courage, self-sacrifice, and patriotism that are woven throughout the fabric of our Armed Forces. His consuming regard for his comrades exemplifies the very strong bond of those who served in the military feel for one another. PFC George made the ultimate sacrifice for us, and it befits that signal act that we name the Asheville North Carolina VA Medical Center in his honor.

I urge my colleagues to support this excellent legislation, introduced by Mr. SHULER, so that we can name the facility in honor of a very, very brave man who helped our country and certainly

the country of South Korea during the Korean War.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague in urging all of my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 2546.

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request that a great honor be bestowed on an equally great soldier. I am referring to PFC Charles George, a son of western North Carolina who bravely sacrificed himself for his fellow soldiers and for his country. Private First Class George came from Cherokee, NC. He was a proud member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and an exemplary soldier in the U.S. Army.

On the night of November 30, 1952, George's company was operating near the South Korean village of Songnae-dong. While charging an enemy camp, Private First Class George dodged mortar and machine-gun fire, jumped into the enemy's trenches, and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. When the American soldiers were ordered to retreat, Private First Class George remained behind to ensure the safety of his withdrawing companions. The enemy then launched a grenade into his company, at which point Private First Class George dove upon the explosive, absorbing the blast and saving his comrades. He died soon after while being evacuated by his fellow soldiers.

Private First Class George was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and is the only member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians to be given this mark of distinction. Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask that we bestow another honor upon Private First Class George by placing his name on the Asheville VA Medical Center. This center has a 112-bed acute care facility and a 120-bed extended care facility that serves veterans in western North Carolina and sections of Georgia, South Carolina, and Tennessee. It provides quality and comprehensive primary, tertiary, and long-term health care to those who have valiantly sacrificed for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Chairman FILNER for his leadership on this issue, as well as the American Legion and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for their diligent efforts to ensure that PFC George is given the honor he deserves. I ask that my colleagues support me in renaming the Asheville VA Medical Center the Charles George VA Medical Center.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2546.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.